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# SKETCHES

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THE NEW COOK.

THE OLD MAIDS' TEMPERANCE MEETING.

MISS SQUASH FROM SQUASHVILLE.

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By  
W. W. FRANCISCO  
Baltimore, Md.

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## THE NEW COOK.

### *Characters.*

Mrs. Farmer.—A refined country lady.

Sally.—The new cook. A white girl, apparently eighteen years old.

Costumes.—Mrs. Farmer wears a plain every-day dress and white apron. Sally wears a plain calico dress, apron and sunbonnet.

Scene.—Kitchen in a country home, furnished with stove, with fire represented, table, chair, broom, book with the words "How to Cook Things" written on back in large print, necessary cooking utensils, etc.

(Mrs. F. enters and sings a song)—I declare, I'm in so much trouble, I just don't know what to do. My cook left this morning and it's now time to get dinner. I suppose I will just have to cook it myself. This is fierce! (Enter Sally.)

Mrs. F.—Well? Who are you? and where did you come from?

Cook (standing on side of foot)—Well, I saw the cook what took an' lef' you this mornin', an' she tol' me I could try fo' the job.

Mrs. F.—Well, you are a perfect stranger to me. I will have to know something about you first. Have you ever had any experience in cooking?

Cook.—You jes' bet I has. I cooked up in New York for Mrs. Rockerbilt for ten years.

Mrs. F.—Is that so? You must be some kind of a cook; but why did you leave Mrs. Rockerbilt?

Cook.—Her an' I had a split-up one day, so I took an' lef'.

Mrs. F.—Well, now next, what is your name?

Cook.—My name's Sally.

Mrs. F.—You mean Sally is your first name, don't you? Well, what is your last name?

Cook.—Sally. That's all I ever knowed.

Mrs. F. (laughing)—Why, surely you have a surname. What is your mother's name?

Cook.—Ev'ybody calls her Mrs. Valley.

Mrs. F.—Well then, your name is Sally Valley. (Laughing.) My, that's a funny combination, Sally Valley. How old are you?

Cook.—I'se eighteen goin' on nineteen.

Mrs. F.—I think I'll give you a trial, anyway. I'm here by myself today; and I only want a plain dinner. You can have a bowl of rice, biscuits, fried eggs and tea.

Cook.—Bowl o' rice, biscuits, fried eggs an' tea.

Mrs. F.—Now you will find everything in the proper place, and should you need a cook book (pointing to book) there is one on the table. Now, I'm going to leave everything in your charge, and I will judge your cooking from your first meal.

Cook.—All right, ma'am, I'll do my level bes'. (Aside to audience.) It's goin' to be a fine dinner, all right.

(Mrs. F. leave stage.)

Cook (getting busy)—Well, I guess I'll put the rice on first, caus' it takes so long to cook. (Gets bag of rice.) She says she wants a bowl o' rice (pouring bowl full of rice) so I'll have a bowl o' rice all right. Now, let me see how to cook it. (Reading from cook book.) How to cook rice. Put rice in bag; tie up with a string; put it in boiler, an' let it sing. (Laughing.) My, that sounds like a mother goose rhyme to me. (Pouring rice in bag and spilling some on floor.) Put it in bag, tie up with a string. (Hunting for string.) I can't find no string, but that receipt calls for a string, an' I'se jes' got to have one. Oh! Yes! (As if struck with a sudden thought. Turning back to audience; stoops down and gets a string, supposedly her string garter.) My, this came in handy all right. (Ties bag with string and throws in pot on stove.) Next comes the tea. (Reading from book.) How to cook tea. Put plenty of tea in pot; pour in water; put on stove; let boil 'til dun; take up; serve hot or cold. (Putting handful of tea in pot.) I'll bet this'll be delicious all right. (Pours in water and sets on stove.) Next comes the biscuits; that's my specialty, biscuits is. (Gets tray; pours in flour. (Reading from cook book.) How to make good biscuits. Get flour, if same is very trashy, sift; put in plenty of soda and salt. (Putting handful of soda and handful of salt in flour. The book calls for a plenty (laughing), so I'se goin' to put in a plenty, all right. (Pours in water from bucket, and proceeds to make bread. Reading from book lying on table.) Should dough stick to hands very badly same can be readily removed by thoroughly rubbing with castor oil. (Gets bottle containing water, marked "castor oil"; pours and rubs on hands.) My! This is all a

fake! It makes it worser! What must I do! (Finish mixing dough; singing in meantime. When this is completed, a pig enters. Performer spies pig.) Well, of all things! What do you think of that! A pig! Where did you come from? (Picks up dough and throws at pig.) Out with you! I don't 'low no pigs in the kitchen when I'se a-cookin' dinner. (Drives out pig; picks up dough; throws it up; catches it; throws it up again and falls on floor.) That's one thing I always did hate, an' that is for a pig to come in the kitchen while I'se a-cookin' dinner. (Puts dough on table; gets long, round bottle and starts to roll out dough with bottle.) My, but this is a tough job! (Reading from book.) Roll dough out thin; cut in squares; put in oven; bake 'til dun; serve hot. Post Script.—Should dough be hard to roll, stamp same several times with foot. (Puts dough on floor; stamps with foot several times.) These'll be beat biscuits whwen I gets through with 'em. (Rolls out dough; cuts in piece; puts in pan and sets in stove.) Next comes the eggs. (Reading from book.) How to stew eggs: Break eggs in pan; put same on stove; let come to a boil; take up; serve hot. (Sets pan on stove; breaks two eggs in pan; throws in shells.) This is my favorite dish. Now, I believe I'se got ev'rything on what the Missus said I mus' have. I think I might as well take a short nap while the things is a-cooking. I was at a dance las' night an' danced all night. Didn't sleep a wink. (Sits in chair; closes eyes, snores for about a minute. Pig walks in again. Performer wakes up and sees pig.) That pig again! Didn't I tol' you to keep out o' this kitchen while I'se a-cookin' dinner? (Takes broom and drives out pig.) Out with you! If that there pig comes in here again, I'll kill 'im (as if struck with a sudden thought), then I'll surprise the Missus with roast veal for dinner. Wouldn't that be fine. I wonder if my biscuits is dun. (Looks in stove and takes out pan of biscuits burnt black, previously put in stove.) They seem to be dun all right. (Puts biscuits in plate; sets on table. (I wonder if my rice is dun, too. I'll take it up anyway. (Takes out very large bag containing something that appears to be cooked rice, previously put in pot.) My, but I didn't know I was a-cookin' so much o' this stuff. I'll bet the Missus ain't got a dish what'll hold it. (Opens bag.) I'll jes' put it in this here bucket (pouring in tin bucket) 'cause I don't believe anything



else here'll hold it. (Sets bucket on table.) Oh! The eggs! (Puts eggs in dish; sets on table; puts plate, knife, fork, etc., on table.) Now, I believe, ev'rything's all ready, I'll ring the bell. (Hunting for bell.) I wonder if the Missus is got one or no. (Picks up cow bell and rings it.) I hope she'll enjoy the dinner. (Addressing audience.) Would any of you like to help enjoy this dinner? If so, kindly come forward. I know the Missus'll be glad to have any of you. (Goes to door and calls to Mrs. F. I don't know yo' name, but whoever you is, you kin come to dinner, 'cause it's getting cold. (To audience.) Them biscuits'll tas' jes' as good cold as hot, I'll bet.

Mrs. F. (entering)—Well, I hope you made out all right, didn't you?

Cook.—You bet yo' life I did. I jes' made out fine.

Mrs. F. (to audience)—Isn't that just fine to have some one whom I can depend on.

Cook (aside to audience)—Wait 'til she spies them biscuits.

Mrs. F.—I'm certainly fortunate to secure such a valuable cook. She must be something extra as she cooked so long for Mrs. Rockerbilt. (Walks to table and spies bucket of rice.) What on earth is all this?

Cook.—That's the rice.

Mrs. F.—You don't expect for me to eat all of that, do you? My! You are extravagant. Where are the biscuits?

Cook (pointing to biscuits)—Them's them.

Mrs. F.—Whv they don't even look like biscuits. They look more like walnuts than anything else. This is fierce!

Cook.—I muster let 'em stayed in the stove little bit too long.

Mrs. F.—I think you must have let them stay in there a whole lot too long. Bring me the tea; let me try that. (Cook brings tea and Mrs. F. pours out cup.) Stronger than any lye! My! I don't blame Mrs. Rockerbilt for not keeping you. You are too extravagant. I'll just have to go without any dinner today. I certainly can't eat this stuff. Now, I want you to straighten up things in here; sweep the room, and when you get through with that, you can get up the eggs, and then milk the cow. Are you a good milker?

Cook.—You jes' bet yo' life I is. I'se a fine milker. I was raised side o' a cow.



Mrs. F. (aside to audience)—I thought she was a calf. (To Cook.) Now, be sure and don't make a mess of that like you did the dinner. (Mrs. F. leave stage.)

Cook.—I'se goin' to hurry up an' get through so I kin take a nap. I'se so sleepy I don't know what to do. (Yarning.) Now, I guess I'll sweep the floor. That's something I always did hate to do. (Gets broom and sweeps at floor; yarning.) I guess it's time to be getting up the eggs now. (Leave stage supposedly to get up eggs; returns with apron full of something to represent eggs; pours in basket). Now, I guess I'll try milkin' the cow. (Getting tin bucket.) That's one thing I sho' does love to do, an' that is to milk. The cow's right here in the yard by the back door. I wonder she didn't come in here while I was a-cookin' dinner. (Leave stage supposedly to milk.)

Voice (from outside)—Whoa! Sar there! Sar I tell you! Whoa there! Stand still! Back yo' leg! Sar! Yo' don't know who yo' foolin' with, do you? Whoa there! (Loud noise as if cow kicks bucket.) Take yo' feets outer that bucket, I tell you! I ain't goin' to fool with yo' no more. (Entering, carrying tin bucket bent up in indescribable shape.) She kicked the bucket all right. (Sets bucket down.) I'se glad she didn't kick me instead o' the bucket. She sho' am the funniest cow I ever seen. I never did find her milker.

Mrs. F. (entering)—What in the world is all of this?

Cook (pointing at bucket)—Cow kicked the bucket.

Mrs. F.—Why, we have had that cow for over five years, and she never was known to kick before.

Cook.—Well, she kicked that bucket all right enough.

Mrs. F. (as if struck with a sudden thought) I'll just bet you tried to milk that cow that's been dry for over a year. Which one did you milk, or try to milk rather?

Cook.—I tried to milk that one with the sawed-off horn an' white spot on her tail.

Mrs. F. (astonished)—Why, that's not a cow at all. That's the family steer. My! where have you been all your life that you can't tell a steer from a cow?

Cook.—I thought 'twas a mighty funny lookin' cow.

Mrs. F.—Did you get up the eggs?

Cook.—You bet I did. Say! how many hens does you keep?

Mrs. F.—Why, I have about twenty. Why?

Cook (laughing)—Goodness, gracious! The roosters an' all muster laid today.

Mrs. F.—Why the idea of such a thing! How many eggs did you get?

Cook.—Goodness knows how many. I ain't even count 'em, 'twas so many.

Mrs. F.—Where are they?

Cook (pointing to basket of eggs)—Them's them.

Mrs. F. (astonished)—Kidnapped the eggs from under all my poor setting hens. (Feeling eggs.) They are still warm. Go and put them back under the hens as quickly as you can. (Cook leave wiwth basket of eggs.) I just won't keep her any longer. I bet she came near breaking Mrs. Rockerbilt. I'll discharge her just as soon as she gets back. (Loud noises from outside.) I'll bet she's broken all those eggs. Oh! Why did I ever hire such a thing as that!

Cook (running in with an egg in each hand)—I broke all but these two; mus' I put these back under the hen?

Mrs. F.—You just get out of my house as quickly as you can! And if I ever catch you on my place again, I'll shoot you!! (Throwing biscuits at cook.) Get out of here, I tell you! Get out of here!

Curtain.

## THE OLD MAIDS' TEMPERANCE MEETING.

### *Characters.*

Miss Larmclock.—An Old Maid. President of The Old Maids' Temperance Union."

Miss Clawhammer.—An Old Maid. A noted speaker on temperance.

Stranger.—A Man, who afterwards disguises as an old maid, who is a member.

Porter.—A Man, who afterwards disguises as an old maid, who is also a member.

Costumes.—All dress as typical old maids. The more comical the better.

Scene.—Lecture room, furnished with three benches without backs, set one behind the other. Platform with two chairs, table and water cooler. Sign on wall, "Old Maids' Temperance Union, Meets Every Month or so." A book on each seat.

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Stranger (entering carrying bottle, supposedly whiskey)—I wonder if this is the right place or no. I got a 'phone message just now to deliver a bottle o' whiskey at 318. I don't see nobody here. I don't believe this is the right place. (Spies sign on wall.) This can't be the place. The quicker I gets out o' here the better. This is no place for me. Gosh! There comes one o' the ladies now! What must I do! (Running up and down floor). I'll just put it in here. (Puts bottle in water cooler. Miss Larmclock enters.)

Stranger (much embarrassed)—Excuse me lady, but I thinks I mus' be in the wrong place. What number is this?

Miss Larmclock.—Why this is 316. The Old Maids Temperance Union.

Stranger.—I wanted 318.

Miss Larmclock.—The place you want, I suppose is next door. (Porter brings lump of ice and drops in cooler.)

Stranger (aside)—There goes my poor bottle! (To lady). You see it was this way, lady. I was sent to deliver a hat to a lady at 318, an' I muster looked at the number wrong.

Miss Larmclock.—Deliver a hat? You don't seem to have any hat with you.

Stranger (embarrassed).—Well, you see—you see—the hat, you know, is just one o' these little bit o' ones.

Miss Larmclock.—Well, where is the hat?

Stranger.—I've—I've got it in my pocket, you know.

Miss Larmclock (laughing).—The idea of such a thing. Who ever heard of anyone carrying a lady's hat in their pocket?

Stranger (feeling in pockets).—I—I believe I must have forgot it. I'll go back an' get it. Well, good-bye! (Leave stage.)

Miss Larmclock (looking at watch).—It's about time for the crowd to be getting here. We had a good attendance at our last meeting, and I feel sure we'll have even a better crowd tonight. Miss Clawhammer is to speak to us tonight. I'm just crazy to hear her. They say she's just fine. (Miss Clawhammer enters.) Why, good evening, Sister Clawhammer! How are you this evening? I'm so glad to see you.

Miss Clawhammer.—I'm just fine, thank you, Sister Larmclock. Don't you know, I thought I would never get here. I walked from the hotel, and the wind was blowing so hard, every time I would take a step, the wind would blow me back two steps.

(Stranger and porter, both disguised as old maids enter, talking very rapidly and making gestures with the hands; each take separate seats on the two back benches. The other two take seats on platform.)

Miss Larmclock (standing).—We will commence our meeting tonight by singing song on page twelve hundred and two. (All open books and sing a song.) I will now introduce you all to Miss Clawhammer, the world renowned speaker, who is a very intimate friend of Mrs. Carrie Nation. Miss Clawhammer will now speak to us. (Miss Larmclock takes seat on front bench.)

Miss Clawhammer (standing).—Good evening, ladies. I'm awful glad to meet with you. I hope you all are well and happy.

Miss Larmclock.—All of us is well but myself.

Miss Clawhammer.—I'm so sorry. What seems to be your trouble?

Miss Larmclock (pointing to foot).—I've got a mighty bothersome corn on my left toe.

Miss Clawhammer.—Is that so? Don't you know I had one of those things once. It's been—well it's been, I guess, about forty or fifty years ago; anyhow, 'twas when I was just a girl. They're awful painful, aren't they?

Miss Larmclock.—You bet they are.

Miss Clawhammer.—Nice day we are having to-night, Is'nt it? I'm cetrainly glad to see so few of you out tonight. I'm also glad to have the pleasure of speaking to you tonight and to look into your sweet smiling faces. I don't hink I ever before, in my whole forty-five years of public speaking, spoke to such an intelligent looking audience. Our subject for tonight is: "How to Break up the Saloons." (Goes to cooler; draws glass of water; takes sip; smiles as if surprised at the taste; drinks water and has very pleased look on face.) As I was saying, our subject for tonight is: "How to Break up the Saloons." I firmly believe with all my heart that the world is getting better every day, and there is less and less drinking every day. (Miss Larmclock appearing to be bothered with her corn takes off shoes. Miss C. continuing.) I believe that in less than five years that every saloon in the United States will be closed, and in less than six years every saloon in the whole world will be closed, and in less than ten years there will not a soul be living who will know what whiskey even tastes like.

Audience.—Hurrah for Sister Clawhammer! Good! We all agreed with you!! (Speaker in meantime takes another drink, wiwth same pleasing effect; continuing speech.) I am twenty-five years old, and I can truthfully say that I have never in my whole life touched a drop of liquor. There are very few who can say that. Isn't it. I can't even bear the smell of it, much less the taste. There is not enough money in the whole wovrld to pay me to even take a drop. Takes another drink.) I believe that the only way to break up the saloons is to take it at the root. Instead of smashing the saloons, smash the whiskey factories.

Audience.—Hurrah for Sister Clawhammer! Good! We all agree with you!

Speaker (continuing).—We citizens should get together, and make a raid on the whiskey factories, that's what we should do! Who will volunteer to lead such a raid?



Audience (all at once)—I will!

Speaker.—Good! I'm so glad to see so many that's willing to take such a noble step. (Takes another drink.) Now that you all are so very enthusiastic over this matter. I would suggest that you call a special meeting and choose a leader. (Something representing a rat runs across floor. All stand up on their seats; tuck their skirts around them tightly, and scream.)

Voices.—Oh! That horrid rat! Help! Police! Murder! Catch me! I'm going to faint! Oh! This is fierce! Those rats'll be the death of me yet! (Rat runs out; all recover from shock, and speaker continues speech.) Now, this growing evil is getting worse and worse every day of this world. You can't even walk along the streets of our city without coming in contact with drunken men. You can't even pass a saloon without seeing men, women and children streaming in and out. So, my dear sisters, we must work. There are more and more saloons erected every day. There are so very few who are willing to help fight this growing evil, so what are we to do? (Takes drink.) I believe that I will live to see the time when practically every man, woman and child in the world will be drunkards more or less. Now, the question is, how to check this growing evil. There are people in this world who don't any more mind taking a drink of whiskey than I mind taking a drink of water from that cooler (pointing to cooler.) Now, my dear sisters, I am sure you all have enjoyed my brilliant speech. I'm sure I have, and I hope to be able to speak to you all again sometime in the near future. (Takes drink and sits down. Each member tips to cooler and takes drink, with same pleasing effect during speech. Miss Larmclock takes stand.) I'm sure we all enjoyed Sister Clawhammer's speech; in fact, I don't think I ever enjoyed a speech any more in my whole life, and I am now fifty-five years old—I mean to say I'm twenty-five. Excuse me, but mistakes will happen.

Miss Clawhammer (aside to audience)—I think her first statement was nearer correct.

Miss Larmclock.—I'll quite agree with our Sister that things are getting worse every day, and that unless we get a move on ourselves, I don't believe we can even walk the streets of our city in safety in a few years. I'm willing to do my part, and I'm sure all of you are

willing to do yours. (Rat runs across floor again and raises same commotion as first time.)

Miss Larmclock (resuming)—Are there any announcements? (One of the members gets up and reads from paper.) Yes; we have one very important announcement. I will announce that there will be a special meeting held here in this building tomorrow morning at 4 o'clock to try to find some way to exterminate the rats from this building. I will state that we have been molested with this pest ever since this organization has been in existence (takes seat).

Miss Larmclock.—We will now serve our refreshments. (Leave stage, and returns immediately with waiter containing four glasses of wine and four crackers; passes them around, and all commence to eat and drink. First one and then the other goes to cooler and drinks. They keep going oftener and oftener until they finally get to pushing one another. By the time they have finished their refreshments, they are all by the cooler trying to dring (refreshments).

Voices (all beginning to fight)—It's my time! 'Tain't yo' time! You've had yo' old time! I'm famishing! Oh! I'm going to faint! Let me get there! Quit yo' shoving! Whats the matter with you anyway! I'll stand up for my rights! You impolite dog! Git off o' my corn! You shove me again! By this time they are fighting good fashion; pulling each other's hair, and almost tearing their clothing off.)

Curtain falls while fighting.



## MISS SQUASH FROM SQUASHVILLE.

This is given by a young man impersonating an old maid who is a clever singer, dancer and pianist.

Costume.—A small comically trimmed hat, wig, fan, large ear-rings, white loose-fitting gloves, a No. 10 shoe, large white buttons on shirtwaist, skirt long in back and short in front. Shirtwaist and skirt must be of a very showy color. A piece of paste-board fastened on back of skirt with the words "HUSBAND WANTED." Face painted to represent a typical old maid.

Properties.—A piano, book, screen, an old satchel and chair made so that bottom will drop out when sat in.

Entering (with satchel in hand, taking long steps, Addressing audience)—Hello there everybody! How's your good health! Nice day we are having tonight; isn't it? I thought I would never get here. The train stopped at every little pig path (waving fan). Next time I'll hire a special. What do you think of me? Don't you think I'm just too cute? I'm quite a belle down in my native town, Squashville. (Lets satchel fall on foot.) Oh! My foot! My foot! My poor little foot! Oh! (screaming as if in pain. Sitting on floor and holding foot.) My foot is ruined forever! I won't be able to walk for six months. (Gives satchel a hard kick. Leave stage limping. Returns without limping. Addressing audience.) Ladies and gentlemen and children—I will now endeavor to play you a very pretty little selection, entitled: "Who plucked the Rose from Grandpapa's Sunbonnett." Sits at piano and plays a very showy piece, like a lively march, using a lot of strength. A selection not very well known, or something original would be best. Addressing audience). Ladies and Gentlemen—My next selection will be that well known piece entitled: "Three Cheers for the Red, Pink and Blue," our national song. You all know that. (Sits at piano, places hands on keys as about to play.) Strange to say, but I believe I have forgotten that piece. (Standing.) What shall I do! (Pause.) Oh! Yes! That piece is in a song book I have here. Say! (Calling to someone behind stage.) Throw me that song book, won't you. (Book is thrown and caught by performer.) Let me see (looking at index), on page 42. (Supposedly finds piece and setting book on piano, plays the piece: "Red, White and Blue" very brilliantly.)

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Note—Play piece through twice; an octave higher last time. Turn over a leaf about twelve times while playing piece over. Performer can judge when to do this. Performer then sits as far as possible from piano to be able to play, with back leg of stool raised off of floor, and plays and signs "Nobody's Darling," not playing the air, but the accompiament; raising hands very high. If performer is able to change his voice first from coarse and then to fine, the effect will be much better. (Addressing audience.) I went to an entertainment the other night, and a little girl three and a half years old recited the poem, "Mary had a Little Ram." She couldn't talk very plain; in fact, I couldn't understand a word she said, but it sounded something like this: (Performer sits at piano and plays something to represent the recitation.) Note—This can be done by striking the C an octave above middle C, and going down on the piano chromatically until G flat is reached, striking each key twice except G flat. Repeat five times.

(Performer then dances awhile and all of a sudden appears to get very much exhausted, and sits suddenly in the chair described. Bottom falls out; performer sinks down and cries piteously.) Oh! Help! Help! Won't some kind gentleman kindly come and help me? Oh! This is awful! Really! This is an accident! Oh! Please! How can you refuse to help anyone in so much trouble! Oh! (Someone in meantime is sent out in audience to go forward in case no one else goes. Man walks up on stage, and just as he reaches out his hand to help, performer quickly gets up. Let it be plainly seen that performer gets up without help.) Oh! (Throwing arms around assistant's neck) you have saved my life! You are a hero! Oh! How can I ever repay you for this noble deed. I suppose I will just have to give you a sweet kiss. My! But I do hate to kiss you before such a crowd. (Addressing audience.) Will you all kindly do me a favor? Just close your eyes for about three and a half seconds. Won't you, please? Please! (Pause.) Come on back here (pulling assistant by coat; goes behind screen; makes loud noise as if kissing; also grunting sound as if enjoying it comes from behind screen.) I'll see you after the show. Don't forget. (Assistant walks back to his seat. Performer leaves stage; returns holding hat and wig in hand.

Exit.

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